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Perhaps no one could have done it. Lafayette certainly could not and did not; and, but for his opportune flight, would have perished on the scaffold. More fortunate than Dumouriez, because clapped into prison by the enemies of the Republic, he was permitted to return to France after his release. His Republican spirit, however, was too unbending for him to accept the Napoleonic military despotism as a substitute for the liberal form of government which he preferred; and, in consequence, he remained inactive and neglected throughout the imperial supremacy. Emerging from his obscurity, which had continued during the reigns of both Louis XVIII. and Charles X., he took the leading part in establishing the rule of the citizen-king, and then withdrew, finally, to his country home.

Not to be seduced from the principles which he had learned at the feet of Washington in the atmosphere of the western world, Lafayette nevertheless remained always greater in character than in action. For action in its highest form he was not really fitted, owing to a certain inflexibility of temperament and to an incapacity to control men in large bodies.

LECTURES ON THE FRENCH REVOLUTION. By LORD ACTON. New York and London: Macmillan Company, 1910.

The vast learning of Lord Acton is displayed in this memorable volume, not in expansion, as in Burton's *Anatomy of Melancholy*, or Buckle's *History of Civilization*, but in extreme compression. In pregnancy and compactness, he recalls Bacon—only he does not permit himself, like either Bacon or Hume, to diverge far into the train of historical reflections suggested by the facts with which he is dealing. The present work has the serious fault which sententiousness is apt to create—it is often obscure, not from the use of inexact language (something foreign to Lord Acton), but from the statement of a fact in a form so brief that it assumes some of the faintness of a generalization. This fault is intensified by the author's taking it for granted that the reader is familiar with the history of the French Revolution even to its minutest particulars. The most profound knowledge of that great event is absolutely necessary to an intelligent understanding of these pages. An important scene is sometimes presented in a single sentence; a mighty popular tendency treated in two. To the reader only partially equipped by previous study to grasp the full meaning of the descriptions and the conclusions much of the volume will seem vague and shadowy. The Revolution glimmers, as it were, behind a veil.

There is nothing to recall the terrific dramatic force of Carlyle's companion masterpiece in this work. Carlyle seized upon a few facts only, but his imagination was able to use them with such power that the whole spirit, the concentrated essence, of the French Revolution is brought vividly before us. Lord Acton, on the other hand, seizes upon many facts; and, as it were, by the blows of another Thor, compresses them into a narrow compass, to the exclusion of all imaginative effects. The work seems rather like the head-lines of a professor's thesis than the actual thesis itself: memoranda strung together connectedly, but intended for future elaboration; a skeleton outline to be clothed with flesh by word of mouth in the lecture-room.

To Americans, the most interesting part of the volume will be the description which the writer gives of the influence of the American Revolution on

the inauguration and expansion of the French Revolution. As Lord Acton points out, it was the Declaration of Independence, not the Federal Constitution, which affected the character of that event. His admiration of Hamilton, who favored monarchy, blinds him to the merits of the other framers. Hamilton alone, he declares, was a man of genius. That great publicist appealed to him as he had done to Talleyrand, because his point of view was so much more in sympathy with European public opinion than the point of view of any other distinguished American.

In this part of his work, Lord Acton is too deferential to those fathers of the Republic who were writers as well as speakers. Otis and Adams are given a disproportionate importance, because they left behind a written record of their political views and impressions. There is no reference to Patrick Henry, presumably because his speeches have practically perished.

In a similar spirit, Lord Acton exalts the work of the voluminous Sieyès, for whom the previous historians of the French Revolution have expressed but small admiration. And he is rather more lenient than is usual in the judgment which he passes on Robespierre. Had Louis XVI. been a strong man, he declares, he would have been saved. This opinion is open to debate. If the king was not strong himself, there were men about him, and at his service, who were certainly strong. In the world-shaking upheaval known as the French Revolution, it is doubtful whether Napoleon himself could, as chief adviser to the monarch, have oppressed the turbulent elements that brought on the Reign of Terror. It was not until the convulsion was subsiding that the opportune whiff of grape-shot was able to put a stop to it finally.

HISTORICAL AND POLITICAL ESSAYS. BY WILLIAM EDWARD HARTPOLE LECKY. London and New York: Longmans, Green & Co., 1910.

One of Mr. Lecky's last literary acts was to collect the numerous essays which he had, from time to time, contributed to different periodicals or delivered in the form of occasional addresses. He did not live long enough, however, to revise them all for publication. This work has been admirably completed by Mrs. Lecky. The essays, as grouped together in a single volume, possess one quality which we do not always detect in a miscellaneous collection of this kind. As is well known, Mr. Lecky, during most of his life, was absorbed in very extensive literary tasks, and while thus occupied rarely permitted his attention to be diverted to the composition of what may be described as the by-products of a great literary career. When he did so, it was always under the influence of some strong motive—he was either responding to a request for the delivery of a disquisition on some public occasion which appealed to him irresistibly, or the subject of the particular article was one which had an urgent claim on his interest as a citizen or as a friend. This fact gives uniform excellence to all these essays. We detect in them the same conscientiousness of treatment which marked his more ambitious labors; the same careful and discriminating research; the same dignity, purity, and elevation of style; the same keen sensitiveness to all the nobler ideas and sentiments. They also possess a remarkable clarity of thought and a perfect sanity of judgment, and are permeated by that knowledge of men and affairs which comes only to one